



# EIT Alumni Community

Yearbook 2017



# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| EIT Alumni 2017 in Review.....   | 03 |
| Meet the 2017 EIT Alumni Board.....  | 04 |
| A True EIT Alumni Start-up Days Success Story: App'ero .....                 | 06 |
| Collaboration at its finest – The EIT Alumni Board of Boards .....           | 10 |
| EIT Health Alumni – The Story so Far.....                                    | 12 |
| EIT Alumni CONNECT .....   | 14 |
| EIT CONNECT winning projects.....  | 20 |
| EIT Roadshow .....   | 21 |
| Seeding Impact.....  | 21 |
| EIT Chaos .....  | 21 |
| Annual Meet Ups .....  | 22 |
| #Digitalumni17 – EIT Digital Annual Meeting 2017 .....                       | 22 |
| CKAA ReConnect Event – Climate Heroes – Climate-KIC Alumni annual event..... | 24 |
| Alumni Unite – Sailing Towards a Sustainable Society.....                    | 26 |
| Women@EIT .....  | 28 |
| Summary.....   | 28 |
| Interview Questions .....  | 28 |
| The EIT Alumni in 2020 .....   | 32 |





## EIT Alumni 2017 in Review

31 December 2017 marks the end of the second year of an EIT Alumni Community guided by the EIT Alumni Board. As ever, the community continues to expand, as more EIT Label students graduate from their degrees and join the global network of EIT Alumni.

The year began with the first ever transition of the EIT Alumni Board. Initial board members, who dedicated their time to building strong foundations for the EIT Alumni community, handed the torch on to a second group of enthusiastic and equally talented alumni. The new Board have eagerly accepted the challenge and their commitment to shaping the future of our community is representative of the passion that is common to all EIT Alumni. It is this drive and powerful ambition that makes our community so promising.

Summer 2017 brought another first for the EIT Alumni Community - the EIT Alumni Board of Boards meeting. For the first time outside of EIT CONNECT, the full boards of the four Alumni Communities met in Budapest to share best practices, network, and collaborate on how

best to shape this wonderful, interdisciplinary community of ours.

A defining feature of the EIT Alumni Community is its diversity, and this was beautifully expressed through this meeting. Connecting individuals with different expertise and backgrounds, and uniting them around a shared passion and common goal is the fuel that makes the EIT Alumni flame burn so brightly.

As usual, a particular highlight of the year was EIT CONNECT. Of the 105 alumni who attended, 70% were newcomers, which exemplifies just how much our community is expanding.

To top off a great year, the Board are currently in talks with representatives from EIT Raw Materials about how to support the setup of their own alumni community. We very much look forward to welcoming them in 2018.





## Meet the 2017 EIT Alumni Board

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The EIT Alumni Board is made up of four representatives that have been nominated by the current Alumni Communities of the EIT's Innovation Communities, supported by a representative from the EIT.

Whether you want to build your own company, start your own project, or just want to follow your passion, you need people from different backgrounds, with different expertise to assist you. The EIT Alumni Board brings together an interdisciplinary network of individuals into one united community which can support you on your journey.

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### Falko Döring, President

Falko is the CommUnity Manager at [EIT InnoEnergy](#). He is a graduate of the ENTECH European Master programme organised by EIT InnoEnergy. Today he uses this passion to shape the future of EIT InnoEnergy's [CommUnity](#). As President, Falko is responsible for the strategic development of the EIT Alumni Community, and representing the EIT Alumni Community to stakeholders.

In his free time he enjoys exploring nature, both the peaceful and the wild. He loves surfing, snowboarding and camping in his self-built campervan. A steady companion is his white Labrador Wolke.



### Esmee Kooijman, Vice-President

Esmee is a graduate of the EIT Climate-KIC Master's course in Climate change and Entrepreneurship. In 2017, she was the Secretary of the Board of the [EIT Climate-KIC Alumni Association](#).

As Vice-President, Esmee oversees the development and implementation of the Board's work plan, and the general promotion of the EIT Alumni Community. Esmee is passionate about photography and likes to go traveling, preferably to places with nature areas and interesting landscapes. In her free time she likes to go scuba diving, snowboarding and hiking.



### Francesco Bonadiman, Community Officer

Francesco completed his EIT Digital Academy Master's double degree in Human Computer interaction and Design, innovation and Entrepreneurship in 2016. He works as UX Designer on an Innovation Activit of EIT Digital, and is also the current President of the [EIT Digital Alumni Foundation](#). As Community Officer of the EIT Alumni Board, Francesco is responsible for the expansion and growth of the EIT Alumni Community and for creating synergies between all the Alumni Communities.



### Antonio Martinez, Treasurer

Antonio is the President of the recently formed EIT Health Alumni, and has been very active in establishing this community since the formation of EIT Health in 2014. He is a graduate of an EIT labelled MSc in Biomedical Engineering, and is in the process of completing his PhD.

As Treasurer on the EIT Alumni Board, Antonio is developing the EIT Alumni community's financial plan and a plan for its mid-to-long term financial sustainability.



### Laurent Roux, EIT Representative

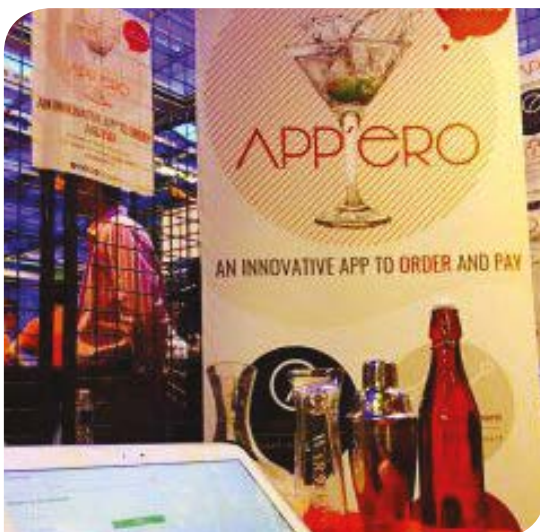
Laurent is the EIT Representative on the EIT Alumni Board, providing support and guidance to the community, and helping to shape their strategic direction. Laurent joined the EIT as [Entrepreneurship Officer](#) in September 2013. He is mainly responsible for the EIT's Entrepreneurship and Business Creation activities across EU-28. Laurent also leads the [EIT Women Leadership and Entrepreneurship activities](#), and as a member of the organising team of INNOVEIT, he is involved in the organisation of the annual EIT awards and Innovation Tour.





# A True EIT Alumni Startup Days Success Story: App'ero

App'ero, a team who took their first steps during the EIT Alumni Start-up Days 2016 have been leaping up the path to success in 2017. They are a great example of an EIT Alumni Success Story.



The International team, composed entirely of EIT Digital students, namely, Ana Gonzalez Plaza, Andrea Vallejo, Devrat Shekawat, Emmanuel Chaudron, Jaechul Lee, and Wissem Chouk, have created an innovative app for bar-goers across the world. Their app allows users to find local bars, place orders through their phone (removing queue time!) and split the bill between friends.

What was just an idea at the close of 2016, has now become a reality. In 2017, App'ero came on in leaps and bounds!

The idea for App'ero truly was a moment of inspiration for the team. When sitting around a table at one of their favourite local bars, discussing what kind of project they could start

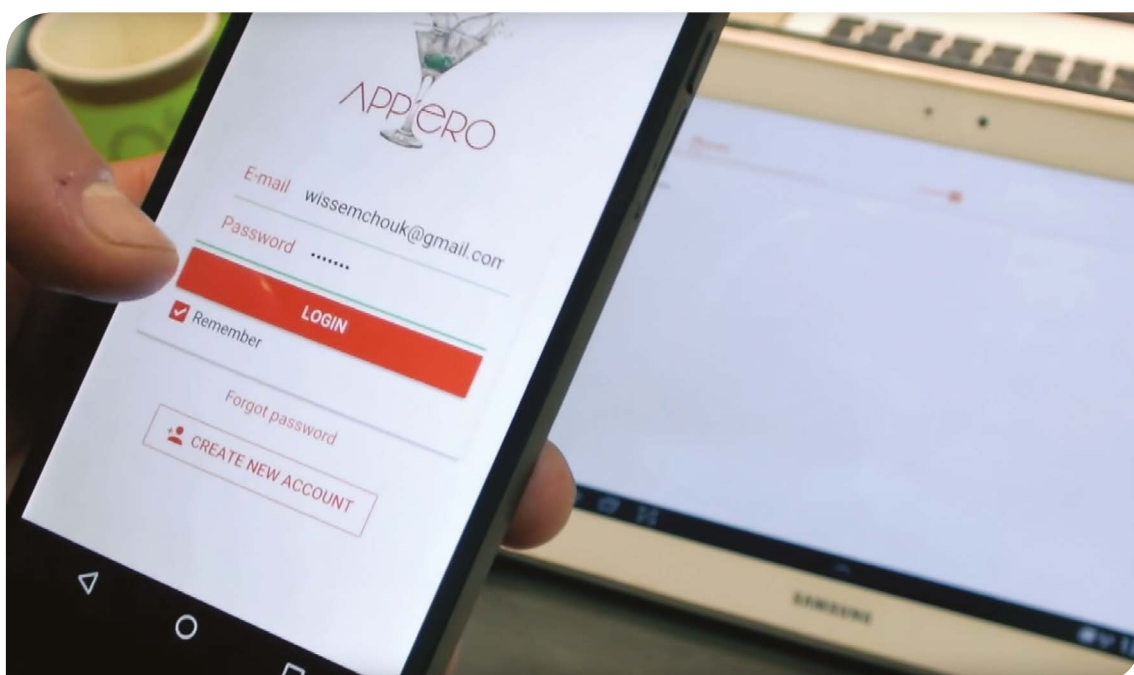


together, and, of course, enjoying a few tasty beers, it came to them! Why should we have to ruin our conversation to go up and queue for more drinks? If only we could order them from our phones!

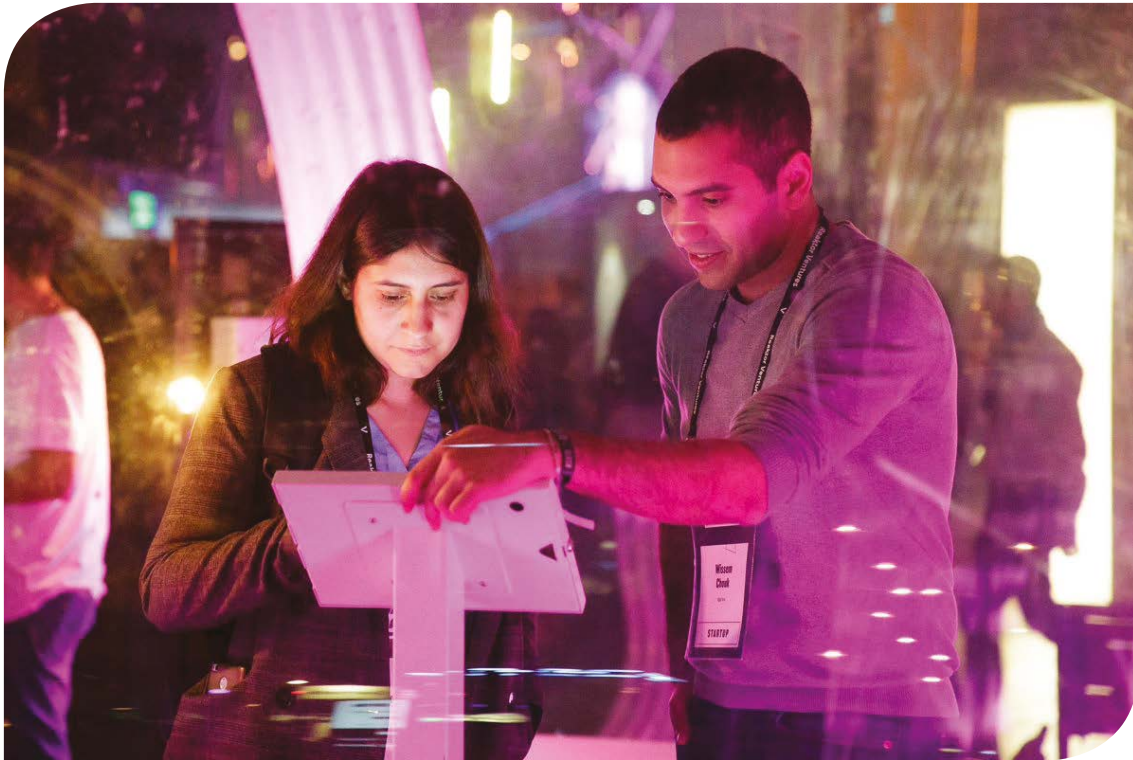
With the end-goal firmly implanted in their minds, the App'ero team used the [EIT Alumni Start-up](#)

[Days 2016](#) to further develop their product. The fact that they were chosen as the winning team in the Paris Start-up Days only further cemented their belief that they were onto something.

Coming into 2017, brimming with confidence, the group participated in the [French national EPA start-up championship](#). This year, just







Finally, App'ero took to the stage once more to compete at the JA European finals in Helsinki. After a long day pitching they once again gained recognition for their efforts, being awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up of the whole competition!

After their success, App'ero got in touch with the EIT Alumni Community to share some of their experiences. They had the following to say:

under 400 students from 20 different institutions competed. After a tough series of public pitching competitions, teams were required to exhibit their concepts on stands for the remainder of the day. Finally, a winner was selected by a jury composed of teachers and jury professionals.

Impressively, App'ero were announced as the winners of the whole competition and were awarded the chance to compete at the JA Europe Enterprise Challenge 2017, which took place this June in Helsinki.

But App'ero didn't stop there. After their victory at the EPA competition, the team entered into a 'proof of concept' partnership with Meridien Hotels, the third largest hotel group in Europe.

"The European Competition was very hard. The rest of the teams had incredible ideas and the level was pretty high. However, after winning the French national competition we were able to receive advice and coaching from some members of (EPA) Entreprendre Pour Apprendre, BNP Paribas Cardif, VISA, Agoranov, La Banque Postale and Disney, among others. We are incredibly grateful for this, we improved our Business Plans, as well as the three pitches we had to do during the European Competition. So, we are very proud to win the 2nd runner up prize with all this support and after receiving such a positive response from the jury. We are also very glad to know that the EIT wants to share our experience in this journey with the rest of the EIT Community."




Since June, App'ero have continued to prove themselves. Not only did they finalise the development of their own website and blog, but they also completed a second proof of concept in August, and developed an entirely new version of App'ero in September!

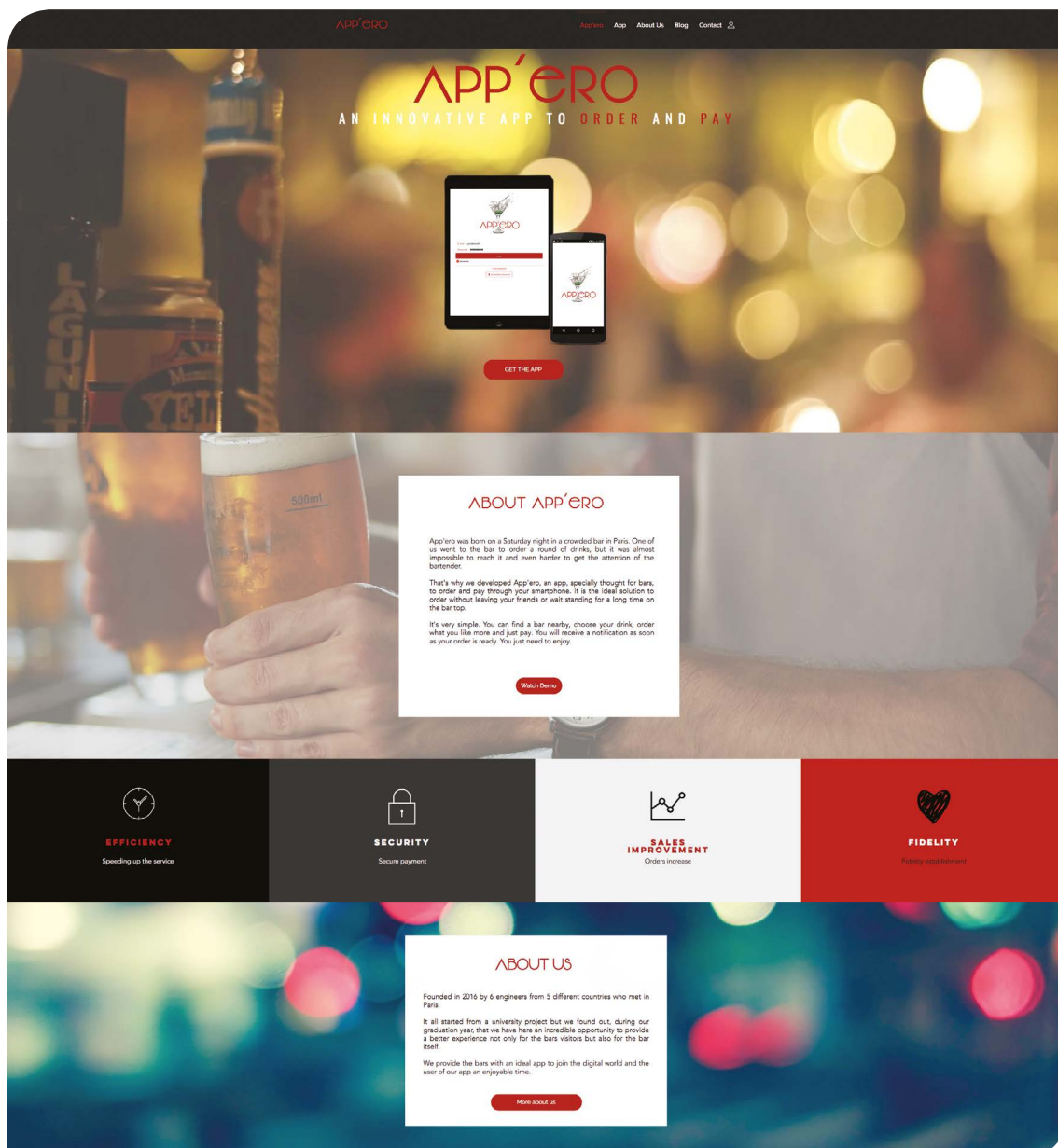
As the year progressed, App'ero's innovative ordering system continued to grow in popularity. In October, following a gruelling internal contest, they were chosen as the champion of the EIT Digital Alumni to represent the community at [#Slush2017](#).

According to the App'ero team, #Slush2017 was an incredible experience full of laser shows, electronic music, and, of course, important

meetings with potential investors. After a long, wonderful, and most importantly, fruitful event, the App'ero team returned home to France, their pockets bulging with the business cards of new found contacts, their minds ablaze with new ideas and opportunities for the future of App'ero.

 **We can't wait to use the App'ero app in a bar soon! #orderlikeahero!**

*Catch up with all the latest App'ero developments and download the app on their [new blog page](#).*





## Collaboration at its finest – The EIT Alumni Board of Boards

For the first time, the board members of the four pillars of the EIT Alumni network met to discuss the future of the wider community and develop some exciting events for the upcoming year.

Solutions were shared, challenges were conquered, and tips were transferred. This meeting was collaboration at its finest!

One thing is certain: there was not a bored face in sight at the Board of Boards meeting!

The meeting began with a warm welcome from the dedicated EIT Alumni supervisor - Laurent Roux. His message was then echoed by the President of our community - Falko Döring.

In voicing his support, our EIT Alumni Community Officer - Francesco Bonadiman -



“Now the boring stuff is done, let’s get on with the exciting things!”



eloquently pointed out that the previous Board of 2016 had efficiently laid the foundations for the EIT Alumni community, or - “done the boring stuff” - and that this year could be dedicated to more exciting things - cross-community events!

## Cross-community Knowledge Exchange

As many of the communities involved had recently gone through some big changes (new boards, new members, new websites/platforms), the first session of the day was dedicated to community presentations, with follow up Q & A, and suggestions from participants on how best to combat each other’s challenges. The enthusiasm to support each other and connect the communities made for a wonderfully positive atmosphere!

## Lunch

Much to the delight of the legion of Italians in attendance, the alumni replenished their energy levels with the old Hungarian classic: pizza, complete with all the traditional Italian toppings - paprika, pineapple, and BBQ sauce!

## Boardception

This is when the meeting really hit its stride. As the white board was brought to the front of the room, there was a collective realisation among

the participants: this Board of Boards’ board had brought them within reach of Boardception!

During a short coffee break, the members were invited to attack the board with as many ideas as possible: on one side, outlining the challenges faced by the wider EIT Alumni Community, and on the other suggesting possible cross-community activities.

There was a vast number of suggestions for activities, ranging from a collaborative newsletter with shared content, to promoting alumni as jury members at EIT Community level events.

Once the list was complete, the suggestions were put to the floor. After much discussion, the best were chosen and are now under development by the EIT Alumni Board. Look out for some new pilot EIT Alumni activities in 2018!

“You’re a Communications Officer? No way! So am I!”

As the day wound to a close, small knowledge-exchange groups were formed to get down to the nitty gritty details of each community. Communications officer with Communications Officer, Secretary with Secretary, and President with President.

Finally, as the late summer sun began to wane, the meeting came to an end. New friendships were made, partnerships formed, and activities planned. You could almost see the proverbial glowing lightbulbs floating above everyone’s heads as they made the descent from the rooftop of EIT HQ.





# EIT Health Alumni – The Story so Far

*Written by the EIT Health Alumni Board*

In June 2017, the EIT Health Alumni Network was launched to grow into a community, a pool of talents and ideas in the area of health and healthcare that provides students and professionals with an entrepreneurial mind set with unique career and networking opportunities. With this approach, we set out to support EIT Health on its mission to spur healthcare innovation in Europe.

Taking stock half a year later clearly shows what 4 dedicated Alumni Board members can achieve in only few months: 10 EIT Health Alumni events (4 of them Cross-KIC) and registration numbers that quickly soared to almost 500. Next to defining the overall strategy for the next years, the Board set up accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, making the new community



**We want to make sure the vision and needs of the alumni are taken into account right from the start**

visible and reaching out to potential members with information on upcoming events. Through mailings, the alumni had the chance to seize “Alumni Opportunities” such as participating in lotteries for tickets to international healthcare summits and networking events.

On top of that, selected Alumni Ambassadors went to key EIT Health events to not only promote the Alumni Network, but act as working group leaders, mentors in Q&A sessions and judges in pitching competitions, depending on their professional background and experience. Towards the end of the year, 6 new interim managers joined the Board to help steer this growing network in the advent of official elections in spring 2018. Strengthening the Board with manpower was an important step in 2017 to make sure that the vision and needs of the alumni are taken into account right from the start.

Tapping the potential of our alumni whilst giving them the opportunity to hone their skills and meet key stakeholders will continue to



be a crucial element of the EIT Health Alumni Network’s roadmap in 2018. A digital platform will amplify our efforts to create a lasting pool of talents and ideas. It will grant a space for healthcare professionals of all career levels to exchange and co-create, find exclusive job and mentoring opportunities. As we grow in numbers and expand our activities, our first Global EIT Health Alumni Summit will be amongst the highlights of 2018.

*The EIT Health Alumni Board*



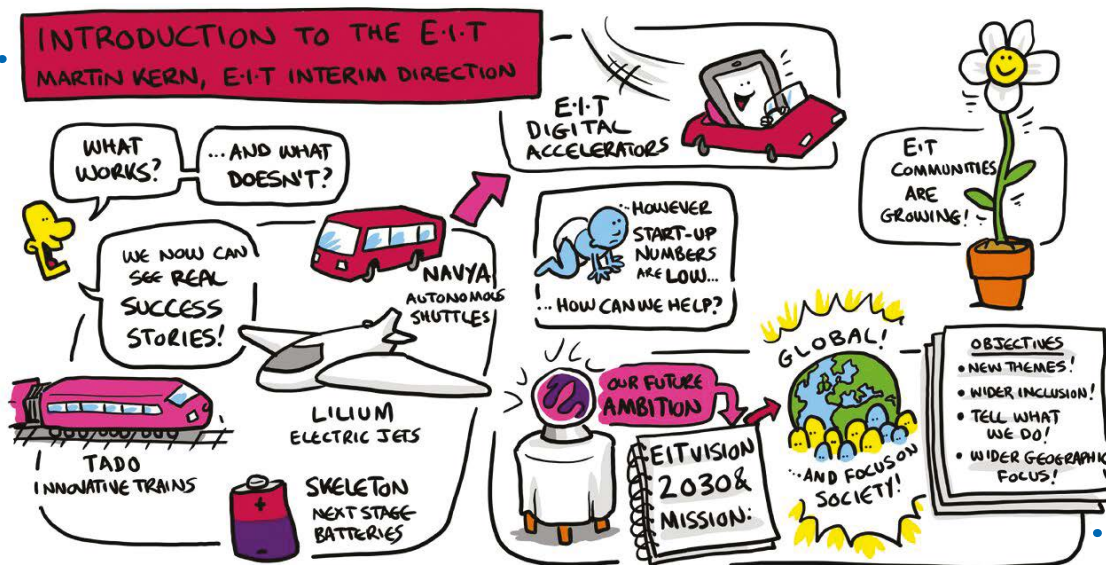
EIT Health Alumni during the Co-Creation Session of the EIT Health Alumni Night

# EIT Alumni CONNECT

In October, over 100 Alumni came together in Budapest to connect, collaborate and innovate at EIT Alumni CONNECT 2017. This annual event is an ideal opportunity for alumni from the different Innovation Communities to work together. Read our comic book coverage to see what happened!

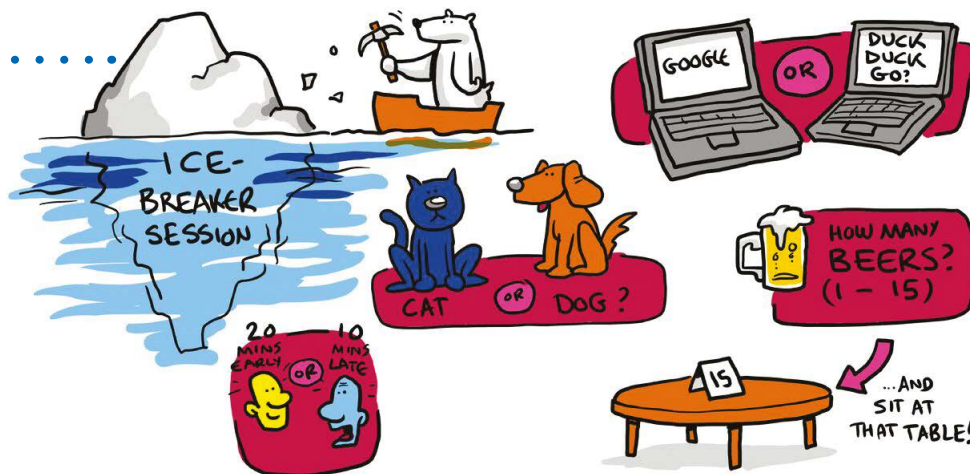


*EIT CONNECT 2017 opened with a welcome and introduction to the new EIT Alumni Board.*

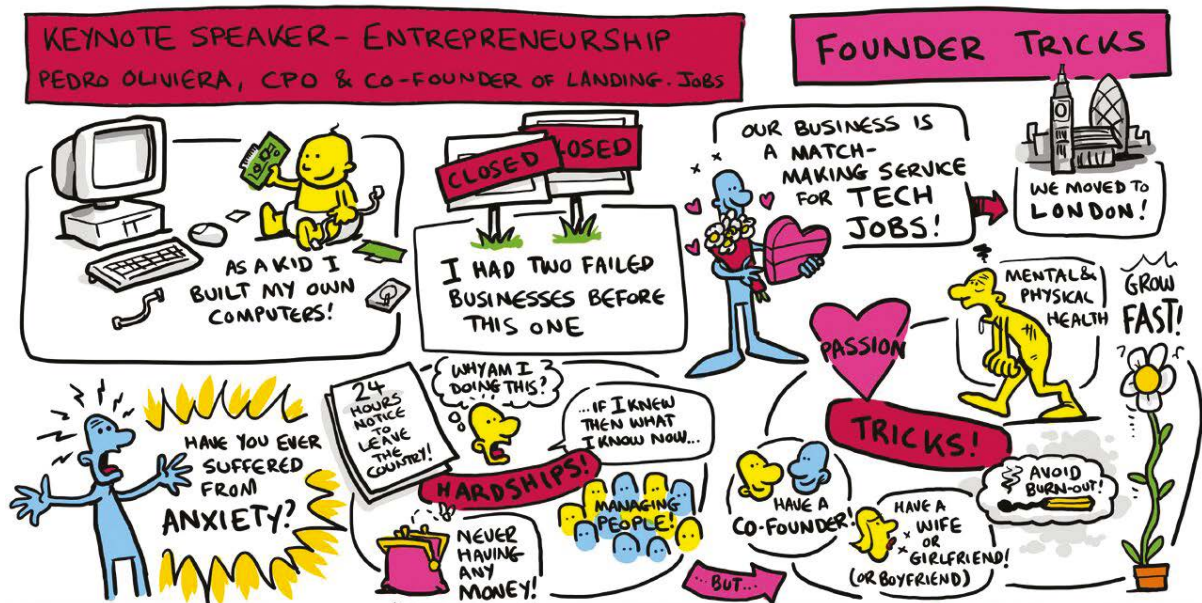


*The second session of the day was given over to Martin Kern, the EIT Interim Director. He introduced participant to the EIT, and asked what else can be done to support the EIT Alumni.*





To mix up all the alumni and to get the creative juices flowing, participants took part in an exciting ice-breaker game.



The first key-note speaker of the event was Pedro Oliveira. He provided some top tips in the world of entrepreneurship.

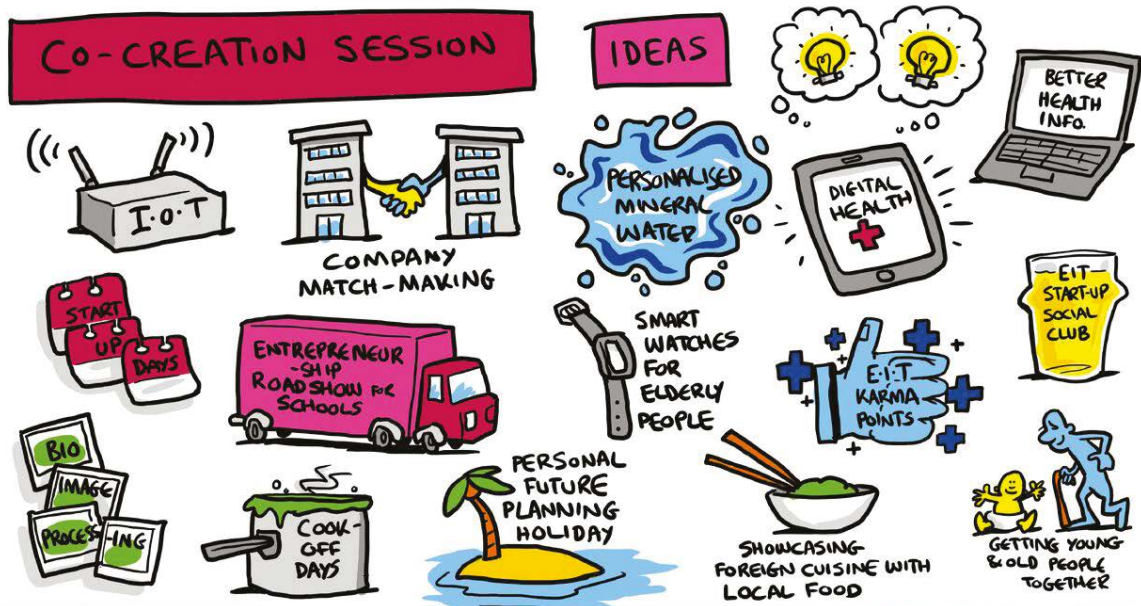


To inspire the participants before they dove into the co-creation session, some alumni shared success stories from previous CONNECT events. Lara Obst took the stage first.



Following Lara's presentation on the Start-up days, Kevin gave a thought provoking talk on his podcast - The Elephant. His key message: Just have fun, don't be afraid to start things.





The co-creation session was the highlight of Day 1. Participants broke off into small teams to develop their own projects.



An impressive 14 diverse projects were created by the participants. These were pitched to a jury to choose the top 3.

## EIT ALUMNI CONNECT - DAY 2



The alumni were welcomed back to EIT CONNECT with a refreshing yoga session to clear their heads. They began the first session by offering one word to describe the event so far.

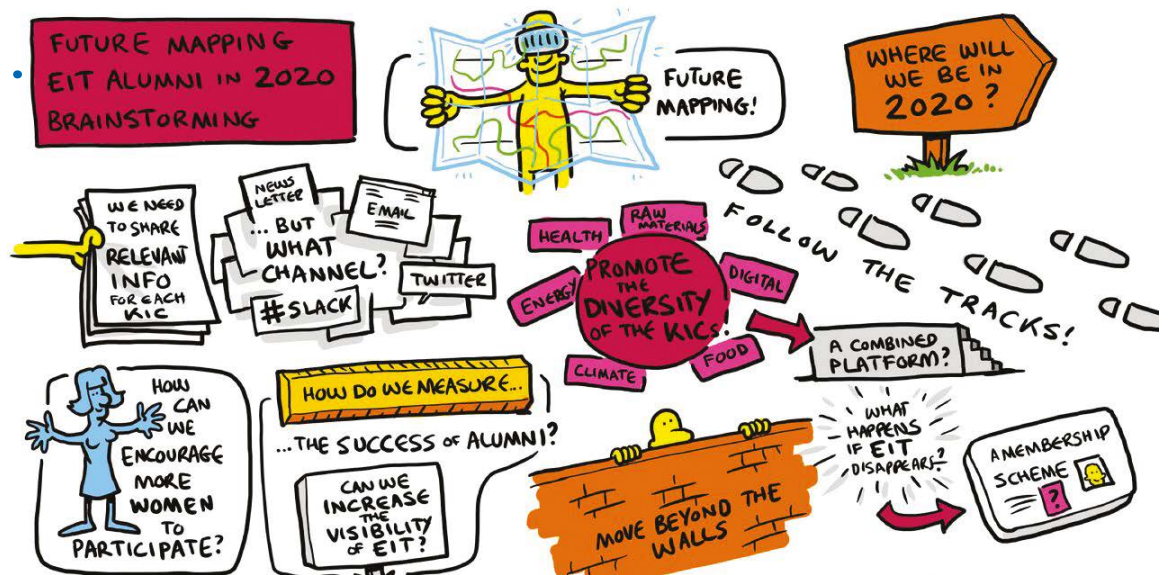


At 10am Andrea Solomonides took to the stage as the second Key-note speaker. Her talk highlighted the importance of community building!





*Maria Kanov, an EIT Digital alumna, presented Women@EIT to participants. They were very eager to get involved!*



*The event came to an end with a final workshop - EIT Alumni in 2020. Participants brainstormed together on how best to develop the EIT Alumni Community.*

## EIT CONNECT winning projects

One of the key goals of EIT CONNECT 2017 was to find three innovative and impactful EIT Alumni projects to be implemented in 2018 with financial support from the EIT Alumni Community.



CONNECT participants line up to pitch their ideas.

In the lead up to EIT CONNECT, alumni were asked to prepare some big ideas to pitch to the rest of the participants. The room was abuzz with activity and enthusiasm while eager alumni posed their ideas to the room in an attempt to gain support from their fellows. Teams were then formed around favourite ideas. For the majority of the first afternoon, the teams worked together to develop a one-pager outlining their proposal and to create a dynamic one-minute elevator style pitch to present to a jury.

An impressive 14 well developed and implementable ideas were pitched at the end of the day.

**Teams were judged based on five criteria carefully selected by EIT Alumni Board:**

- 1 Innovativeness
- 2 Feasibility
- 3 Entrepreneurial Drive
- 4 Cross-KIC compatibility
- 5 Societal Impact

After much deliberation, the jury eventually came to a unanimous verdict. The three winning



teams selected were **EIT Roadshow, Seeding Impact, and EIT Chaos.**

## EIT Roadshow

The plan of EIT Roadshow is to introduce the concepts of Entrepreneurship and Innovation into the education process of students aged 12-15 using formal methods and informal activities. Here, the students will be encouraged to transform their knowledge gained in the classroom into innovative ideas that recognize and address the problems in their communities, work towards social cohesion and reduce inequalities. The whole project will be captured and shared to the world to bring to light the need of such programmes in our current eco-system. A dedicated media campaign will also be run to attract more participants (high schools, organisations, clubs etc.) and volunteers.

## Seeding Impact

Seeding Impact is to be a non-profit organization which can give students and professionals the opportunity to join impactful international projects. We will provide them with the chance to work on real projects provided by NGOs and civil societies that are lacking in resources. Although it might sound like an existing concept, Seeding Impact is unique in that it offers a real opportunity, since we also offer 2-4 days for intensive projects that will be

partially financed, so people can actually afford to participate in these activities, and we can support those NGOs lacking in resources.

## EIT Chaos

A lot of great ideas don't get past the ideation phase due to the lack of expertise in executing a project and attaining a MVP (Minimum Viable Product). Now, these people can send a short summary of their idea, along with a problem they have to Chaos, and the expert panel of the Chaos team will donate time to providing feedback on that idea.

### Feedback includes

- Critical review of the idea
- Link to similar projects
- Feasibility analysis, approximate costs, and path to MVP

Excellent ideas can be proposed to 'start-up days' or equivalent hack challenges to create a MVP in a weekend

These innovative projects will be led by their **CONNECT** founders, but the projects are designed for the whole EIT Alumni Community to contribute to. If you have any suggestions, or want to get involved, send an e-mail to [EIT-Alumni@eit.europa.eu](mailto:EIT-Alumni@eit.europa.eu)



teams co-create at EIT CONNECT 2017



# Annual Meet Ups

## #Digitalumni17 – EIT Digital Annual Meeting 2017

On the 20th of March 2017, EIT Digital Alumni held their 1st annual community meeting in Brussels. The idea was to create a memorable and exciting platform, a forum for discussion, a journey for the alumni. They aimed to inspire. They succeeded.



Mills,  
co-founder of Ustwo

The event began in the late hours of the 19th. As the last rays of sun shining on the Grand Place were slowly eclipsed by the towering steeple of the City Hall, alumni assembled in the square for a night of networking, sightseeing, lively conversation and (we can only presume) the sampling of a few Belgian beers.

The next morning, fresh faced and ready to collaborate, the alumni streamed down the thin winding veins of Brussels town centre. Their destination? The European Parliament; the heart of Europe.

After a stirring tour of the site where unanticipated exits are taken and passionate speeches are given, the alumni were transferred back to the Egg, suitably inspired.

Following a quick registration, they were treated to a keynote speech from the unconventionally captivating Mills, the co-founder of Ustwo.





#### His key points?

- **Follow your passion!** Don't let anyone say you can't do it. Live your dreams. If you have an idea, dare to pursue it. Don't be afraid of what other people think about it. JFDI!
- **Know** that it's going to take **all your time!**
- **Embrace succailure.** Learn from your failures. Use them to mould you into the person you want to be.
- **Love your 'fampany'.** Companies shouldn't be about the individual. It's all about the collective, looking out for each other and growing together.



After a tasty bite to eat, the participants reconvened for a panel discussion from three illustrious figures of EIT Digital. Willem Jonker, the CEO, Anders Flodström, Chief Education Officer, and Edna Ayime-Yahil, the Head of

Communications, took to the stage offering a fine balance of personal insights and practical advice to spur the alumni forward.

The latter half of the event was given to presentations delivered by alumni, for alumni.



Reports from board members on successful events gone by, plans for the future, and new intriguing opportunities were intertwined with the presentations of alumni working groups, eager to display and discuss their new initiatives and the benefits they would bring. Not only to their alumni family, but to society as a whole.

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. Almost 24 hours after the initial Grand Place reunion, alumni had the chance discuss the day's events, mull over ideas and reinforce new bonds.

**So as you can see, the EIT Digital Alumni Annual event was, by all accounts, legendary!**

# CKAA ReConnect Event - Climate Heroes – Climate-KIC Alumni annual event

*By Esmee Kooijman, CKAA Secretary 2017 & EIT Alumni Vice President 2017*

Since the start of the 2017 the CKAA board has been trying to create a stronger community of change-makers and CKAA ambassadors. It was visible that the community spirit and enthusiasm of the alumni was dwindling. For this reason, it was decided to have a different focus and a new approach towards motivating the community through the 'ReConnect' event, which took place between 24-26 November in Rotterdam.



The goals of the event were to redefine and re-build the community from the bottom-up, as well as to inspire members to fulfil their destiny, and become 'Climate Heroes'!

The CKAA "ReConnect" event 2017 hit record numbers, with a total of over 330 participants from 28 different countries. In addition to alumni, [EIT Climate-KIC Employees](#) (mostly from education), representatives from EIT (Alumni), EIT Digital Alumni, EIT Health Alumni and 14 other organisations attended the event and/or contributed to the program.

## Let's build this community!

The kick-off of the day was an inspiring keynote from EIT Climate-KIC CEO Kirsten Dunlop about how a radical change of systems is needed to reach decarbonisation goals and the role that EIT Climate-KIC community can play in this. This was followed with a panel discussion on how to

build impactful communities with community leaders of Uprising, [Marie Curie Alumni](#) and Protect Our Winters Germany.

The community building sessions resulted in the definition of new CKAA missions: to create a space for individual change-makers to connect and support each other; to advance the climate change agenda through collective action.

## Let's get inspired and get to work!

How can entrepreneurship enable you to be a climate hero? According to the keynote speaker Maurits Groen – the Dutch Sustainapreneur – entrepreneurs can be disruptive to the system and create environmental and social value. One of his companies is **WakaWaka** - solar powered light and chargers - and with their Buy-One-Give-One model already >1.3 million people in developing countries have been provided with this device.





did! There was the CKA Climate Pub quiz, Make the Climate Great Again party, a Climate Heroes photo wall, e-waste recycling arcade games, a Sustainable Rotterdam City Tour, morning yoga and many more activities. Also we had a networking app, Brella, which participants could use to connect with others that are, for instance, working in the same field. They could 'Book a Room' to meet each other and no less than 130 of these meetings took place during the event. We are still waiting to hear some success stories ;-)

Next, the event's all-star panel, made up of climate heroes from start-ups Coolar, Caffelink and Oorja: Development Solutions, told their own inspirational stories and came to the same conclusion as the keynote speaker: start-ups can disrupt and could change the world for good!

We don't want just to inspire, we want to provide the tools to make action possible. To achieve this, we organised 9 different workshops on how to grow your start-up using crowdfunding or engage with the media, how to present yourself as an individual in the job market by using personal branding, and also workshops on climate advocacy, and how to engage companies in setting climate targets by providing knowledge and skills.



## Let's (Re)connect!

Of course building a community is all about networking and having fun as well – and so we

 See you next year!



Kirstin Dunlop, CEO of EIT Climate-KIC presents at ReConnect

# AlumniUnite – Sailing Towards a Sustainable Society

Written by David Duque Lozano, EIT InnoEnergy Alumnus

AlumniUnite is the flagship event of the CommUnity by EIT InnoEnergy. This yearly event is designed as a space where alumni from the Master and PhD school, entrepreneurs, companies and experts in the energy field can gather, share their passion for sustainable energy, create opportunities for collaboration, and reinforce and develop the CommUnity.



Kicking off at 5:00 PM Friday, December 1st 2017 at the Barcelona International Convention Center. The event began with inspiring and thought-provoking speeches from different Key Note Speakers.

Elena Bou, the Innovation Director from EIT InnoEnergy first discussed how innovation has to depart from following a linear model to remove more divergent and convergent patterns.

Two former EIT InnoEnergy Master students, Alexandra Marques Ferreira da Silva (MSc. ENTECH 2014-2016) and Nuno Miguel Costa Dos Santos Rodrigues (MSc. RENE 2014-2016) were invited as the second Key Note Speakers. They were also there to represent Energias de Portugal (EDP), the biggest energy utility in Portugal, with an energy mix composed of over 70% of renewables. Alexandra and Nuno gave great insights on how being a 'Rookie' is a great added value for a company, thanks to what the

Portuguese describe as "Desenrascar", meaning *"The act of improvising a sound solution or plan without really knowing what you are doing" ... "which usually involves a lot of praying and cursing"*.

Katrin Puentz then introduced (B)energy, a company seeking to empower people in developing countries with marked energy poverty through energy products rather than humanitarian aid. She has introduced, for instance, a product to efficiently transport natural gas.

The keynote speaker series was closed by Geoffroy de Bérail, the COO of Glowee, a company that strives to introduce bioluminescence to the global lighting market.

The day ended with a CommUnity dinner: great food, networking and lots of fun!

Saturday began with a holistic and tailor-made approach: following the "Open Space Studio by InnoEnergy", teams made of rookies,



entrepreneurs and experts were created to work together in co-creation sessions to find solutions to particular challenges introduced by different companies. Alongside this, an Innovation by Design Workshop was held by André Haverkort and Madis Talmar.

As Alexandra Marques from EDP said, "These co-creation sessions are a great space where students and graduates who really like to take challenges can contribute and innovate", "There is a lot of talent within EIT InnoEnergy, and through these challenges we get different and new perspectives".

The sessions were followed by a Networking lunch in the so called "Market Place". This was a physical space where major companies could share more detailed information with participants, exchange ideas, and discuss offers. It was a great opportunity for the companies to pose their challenges to some of the best talents in sustainable energy.

Next up was the CommUnity Speaker series!

Several members of the CommUnity shared inspiring stories from certain periods of their lives, encouraging other members to learn from their experiences and to use them to their advantage in the future. **The shared stories included:**

- **Maria Campello** - Energy innovation in the biggest kraft paper mill in Europe (Smurfit Kappa);
- **Divya Balakrishnan** - Plugging in the world! - The East African adventure;
- **Farah Cheaib** - Implications of uncertainties in the Energy Transition on Electric Utilities;
- **David Ulrich Ziegler** - Securing critical infrastructure - Smart Metering, Smart Grid and beyond - the German approach;
- **Eirik Eide Pettersen** - How to run an advanced nuclear reactor start-up in anti-nuclear Denmark;
- **Silvia Francioso** - SunnyDaysAreFullOfEnergy - Takeaways from fieldwork in Tanzania;
- **Wojciech Kata** - Standing on the shoulders of giant - fostering innovation within corporate environment;

- **João Fonseca** - A survivor's guide to consultancyland - the climb from University to the top of a big four;
- **Antoni Martinez** - A success story of Ecotècnia, a team of pioneering wind power entrepreneurs changing the global energy business.

After such a productive day, a restoring dinner was needed! Participants met at the Hilton Hotel, where delicious food was served in a very festive environment. Most of the chairs had reindeer antlers, white beards, red hats, and other items that gave the venue a very welcoming feeling. During the meal, Claudio Geyken, CommUnity Officer, thanked the whole CommUnity for everything that had been achieved in 2017. Two members were then awarded for their great effort and contributions to the CommUnity: the first place was awarded to Davide Garufi, and the second place to Jacopo Sala.

Sunday morning was welcomed with Tools2Impact; a variety of 45-minute workshop sessions, where speakers delivered new insights on a relevant topic, discussing the soft and hard skills with which the participants can have an impact in their surroundings. **The sessions were as follows:**

- **Cristian Boscheri** - Breaking Out!;
- **Joao Fonseca** - Effective communication: techniques to be heard and captivate people;
- **Ilan Momber** - Bucket Lists, Values, Goal Setting, Fear Setting and Morning Routines;
- **Tillmann Laux** - Teaching Energy - A crash course in professional development for (young) adults.

The last point in the agenda of Alumni Unite involved an activity that would reflect one of the core values of the CommUnity: collaboration. Alumni, students and entrepreneurs were invited to the stage to pitch their personal ideas and projects. All the participants of the event then teamed up with the presenters to collaborate on how to further improve their ideas. As of today, some of these ideas are still being worked on by several CommUnity members.

And so, AlumniUnite came to a close: Alumni had networked, companies had the chance to meet talented people and work on some of the great challenges of the energy sector, and entrepreneurs were inspired by new ideas and the energy of the CommUnity.



## 8. Women@EIT

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The ladies behind Women@EIT want to create a network that connects both female EIT students and Alumni members and gives them a sense of belonging. They intend to achieve this goal through organizing regular events that give attendees the opportunity to learn new technical skills to advance in their careers and get encouraged to start their own business in the future.

On top of that, Women@EIT stands for promoting female role models, creating comfortable learning environments, female networking, raising awareness that inequalities between men and women still exist and trying to diminish them. Women@EIT wants to be a cross-Community initiative, which also creates a platform for sharing opportunities, events and ideas and increases the visibility of EIT among potential female applicants to EIT's programs.

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**The EIT Alumni Community got in touch with the two co-founders of this great initiative: Maria Kanov and Dora Palfi. They had the following to say:**

**Tell us a bit about yourselves and your connection to the EIT Alumni Community.**

**Maria:** Hi, I'm Maria and originally from Austria. I just graduated from the EIT Digital Master School and specialized in Human-Computer Interaction and Design. Through Women@EIT I got into contact with the EIT Digital Alumni, who have proven to be our main supporter so far. In the meantime, I have also taken on the role of the Proxy in the EIT Alumni board.

**Dora:** My name is Dora, I am originally from Hungary but I have been studying and living abroad for the past six years. I began my master's studies in the fall of 2016 with EIT Digital in Sweden in the Human Computer Interaction track. I finished my first year and the EIT Digital Summer Academy and I am currently on a study leave focusing on my work to get more girls into tech!

**What inspired you to get involved in digital innovation?**

**Maria:** I studied computer science for my Bachelor's to acquire fundamental technical knowledge. However, it was not until my Master's that I truly realized in how many different ways this knowledge can be used and the amazing things you can build from scratch. It is inspiring for me to see where your passion can lead you.

**Dora:** During my undergraduate studies I started to have an interest for programming and the ways in which it could be used to create impact. However, the turning point was attending my first hackathon. The idea was to build a health related project with a strong social component. Through this experience I realised that code is a tool to work on things you care about and to create great things, and that finding meaningful projects and collaborating with other people is something that I really enjoy.

**What was the best part of your EIT Digital Master's degree?**

**Maria:** I believe the best part was that it made me grow personally. The opportunities that we received and the interesting projects that we could work on truly broadened my horizons. Additionally, all the traveling and meeting people from all around the world allows you to learn so much more than what can be taught in a classroom, particularly about yourself. All in all, it was an unforgettable experience.

**Dora:** Of course meeting Maria and starting Women@EIT together! ;) In all seriousness the best part of my studies was meeting so many interesting, intelligent and motivated people from all around the world who would like to create new things with technology. I have had very exciting projects and teams both in and outside the classroom during my studies.

**Some people talk of there being a 'tech-gender gap', particularly in the Digital innovation industry, do you think this is true?**

**Maria:** Unfortunately, yes. This was even evident in my personal experiences during my Bachelor and Master studies, where I was one of the only women. At every innovation and tech event I attend I still notice the low representation of female participants, female speakers or female jury members. Nevertheless I have hope that this gap is slowly closing because of initiatives like ours!

**Dora:** Terms such as 'tech-gender gap' tend to be widely and inconsistently used in the media so this really depends on what you mean by it. But if you refer to the underrepresentation of women in the tech sector then definitely yes. This is something that is simply proven by numbers. For example in the EIT Digital Master School as well, only 23% of the students are female.

**Tell us about Women@EIT and why you decided to start this initiative**

**Maria:** In my first year of the EIT Digital Master School, I found myself being the only female student in Twente. Then I started my second year in Stockholm and I was happy to see many more women who just started the program. I was looking for a possibility for us to connect

and learn from each other, but there was none. So we just decided to create one!

**Dora:** Part of my response from the previous question also answers this: in the EIT Digital Master Program less than 25% of the students are female and while we would like to change this in the long run we would also like to ensure in the short run that the women who are part of the program do not feel like “they don’t fit in”. We are creating a strong community of our female students and alumni and organize events where we can develop professionally. We also have a platform to share opportunities with each other. We hope that this network will stick with us as we further progress in our careers and it remains a safe space that we can turn to with our questions.

**Some people might question initiatives that target a specific gender and perhaps reinforce the idea that women in the world of entrepreneurship need additional support. What’s your take on this?**

**Maria:** When we started women@EIT, we were indeed confronted with some critical voices coming from male students. We decided that the best idea is to cordially invite them to join our events to remove any prejudices. We also specifically highlight at all our presentations

that we don’t want to create a gap between men and women, but instead raise the awareness that inequalities between genders still exist and try to work on this together.

**Dora:** As a young woman starting my career in tech and entrepreneurship what I can see is that industry and especially leadership positions are dominated by men, and that most start-ups are started by men. If you think about being in my position, initiatives such as Women@EIT give me the opportunity to see that there are other women in my situation and allow me to feel more comfortable and confident. I do not think of “support” as something negative.

**What’s next for Women@EIT? How do you plan to scale up?**

**Maria:** Fortunately, we never run out of ideas. Of course there are still many more events in the works across different locations in Europe. By partnering up with similar initiatives, we want to increase our public presence and offer more opportunities for our members. We also want to motivate participants into becoming local representatives or mentors to stimulate more activity within the community.

**Dora:** We had a series of successful events in Stockholm, and now one in Berlin as well. The plan is to spread to many other EIT co-location







centres with the help of local representatives and have Women@EIT events all over Europe. We are also planning to launch a mentorship program for the incoming female students of the EIT Digital Master School.

### What advice would you give to other alumni wanting to set up their own initiative?

**Maria:** I can only repeat what Dora said below! :) Since we represent a diverse range of cultures and educational backgrounds, there is a big potential for initiatives and projects that other students and alumni can benefit from. It's a great way to give back.

**Dora:** Absolutely go for it! We have a great network with resources available waiting to be utilized! If it is an initiative for EIT alumni and students: once you have a clear vision in mind you can reach out to the leadership board of the Alumni Community to start your initiative as a working group of EIT Alumni. This way you can have access to both support and funding from the community to make your vision come true.

### How can the EIT Alumni community do more to support Women@EIT?

**Maria:** So far they really did a great job in helping us wherever they can. We are very grateful to have their full support!

**Dora:** the EIT Alumni community has been really good with spreading our message and connecting us with other initiatives with a similar vision which has been very helpful - I hope they will continue supporting us in this way!

### How do you see the future for women in tech and entrepreneurship in general?

**Maria:** Thanks to a growing number of opportunities specifically targeted to women and to the promotion of female role models, I believe that a change is slowly taking place in the minds of the general public. This is why I also expect to see more promising results, meaning more women being encouraged to take on a career in tech or start their own innovative business.

**Dora:** Bright! Thanks to women@EIT we have been able to connect with many ambitious female entrepreneurs over the past year, and I am hoping their example will inspire even more women to work in tech and start their own businesses!

Want to get involved in Women@EIT events, or host one in your own city?

Get in touch with us! -

[EIT-Alumni@eit.europa.eu](mailto:EIT-Alumni@eit.europa.eu)



## 9. The EIT Alumni in 2020

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The following goals are based on feedback given during the EIT Alumni Board of Boards meeting, and the productive 'EIT Alumni in 2020' session during EIT Alumni CONNECT 2017. This is how we see our community and where we plan to be in 2020.

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The EIT Alumni is an interdisciplinary and multicultural community striving to create social change through innovation and entrepreneurship. Our mission is to unite the individual Alumni Communities, facilitate communication flows and inspire cross-community collaboration between members. Ultimately, our vision is to be a renowned community of like-minded innovators who actively collaborate to create a positive global impact.

A key attribute of our community is diversity, not only in terms of fields of expertise, but also culturally, nationally, and in age and gender. Where you have diversity, collective intelligence increases.

A strong and committed alumni community not only benefits its members, but also the EIT as a whole. The alumni are exceptional brand ambassadors for the EIT and its Innovation Communities. Our continued success provides tangible evidence of the value of the EIT's education programmes and business accelerators.

To further strengthen and develop our alumni community by 2020, **we will:**

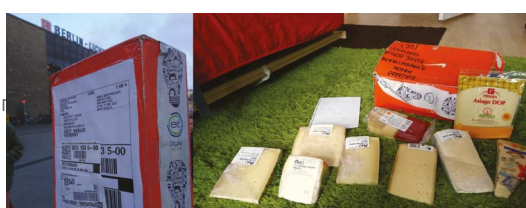
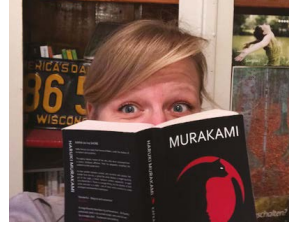
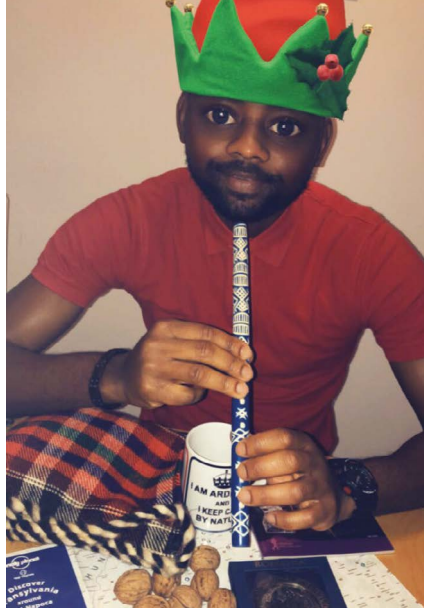
- Push for the greater involvement of the whole EIT Alumni community, in the form of more

regular cross-KIC meet ups, and increasing transparency in our communication channels.

- Successfully integrate the alumni from new EIT Innovation Communities into our network.
- Strengthen and reinforce the professional image of our network, by connecting to external partners and similar organisations, and developing strong relationships with the companies our alumni work with.
- Increase the visibility of the EIT Alumni. Externally, by arranging workshops and events with recognised brands and institutions across Europe. Internally, by improving our brand awareness among existing and potential members.
- Have an evident, positive impact in Europe. Both in the form of our own EIT Alumni activities and social impact projects, and through the various start-ups and projects formed by our members.

To put it simply, our key goals are:  
**Growing. Connecting. Engaging.  
Innovating.**







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[eitalumni.eu](http://eitalumni.eu)

The EIT Alumni is supported by the EIT,  
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